News Release
Communiqué

Ontario

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée

For Immediate Release
May 22, 2007
2007/nr-121

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT REDUCING HEALTH CARE WAIT TIMES

New Wait Time Data Shows Double-Digit Drops in the Erie St. Clair Area

TORONTO – New data shows the Ontario government's Wait Time Strategy is resulting in decreases in wait times for key health services in the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) area, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"Trends in the Erie St. Clair LHIN area are encouraging with significant decreases in wait times for a number of key health services," Smitherman said. "Through the leadership and hard work of thousands of front line health professionals, the Wait Time Strategy is clearly achieving real results for patients by improving access to care, closer to home."

As a result of the government's Wait Time Strategy, wait times in which nine out of 10 patients have completed their surgery or have had their exam in the Erie St. Clair LHIN area have decreased significantly since August/September 2005 by:

- 72.4 per cent for angiography (42 days)
- 59.4 per cent for cataract surgery (95 days)
- 42.0 per cent for CT scans (47 days).

Wait times for other key health services have also declined by:

- 3.4 per cent for hip replacement (eight days).

At the same time, Smitherman acknowledged two health service areas that remain a challenge – there has been an 80.8 per cent rise in cancer surgery wait times and a 30.2 per cent increase in knee replacement wait times since August/September 2005.

"We continue to make significant investments in cancer surgery and knee replacements and we expect to see improvements in wait times for these areas," Smitherman said.

Since the launch of the Wait Time Strategy, the Ontario government has invested $20,549,581 for additional procedures in hospitals in the Erie St. Clair LHIN area, including:

- 4,729 cataract surgeries ($3,536,200)
- 2,715 cardiac procedures ($1,432,050)
- 1,531 hip and knee joint replacements ($10,687,630)
- 450 cancer surgeries ($1,623,341)
- 8,044 hours, 12,066 exams MRI ($2,474,460)
- 3,183 hours, 11,141 exams CT ($795,900).

The new wait time data is available at www.ontariowaittimes.com, which is closing in on nearly 4 million hits as of today.

"We are pleased with the work that all of our provider hospitals and medical staff have done to make the wait time improvements a reality for our LHIN. We are proud to have the lowest wait time for cataract surgery in the province as this highlights the commitment to excellence that our providers demonstrate," said Sharon Pillon, Senior Director of Performance Management and Contract Allocations for the Erie St. Clair LHIN. "We recognize there are opportunities for improvement and are working with all our wait time partners to address these. With continuous quality processes we are striving to improve timely access to care for all citizens in the Erie St. Clair LHIN."

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait time and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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